

BE SOCIAL BE SMART

SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDE







MESSAGE FROM THE ADVOCATE

DIAHANN GORDON HARRISON



The internet, especially access via smart phones and social media platforms, has become an essential part of all our lives; of course, this has also become the norm for many children, i.e. our under 18 population. Indeed there are many good things about the internet and social media but also many possible dangers such as certain types of negative content and people we would ideally want our children to avoid. Teaching our children to stay away from, and not talk to strangers, almost does not apply in the virtual world or cyber space. The paradigms seem to have shifted and brought the potential to have a limitless number of “friends” in cyber

space; strangers may not be considered strangers anymore and taboo topics may not be so taboo.

Indeed, the online space can be an excellent resource for teaching and learning, however not all online content is appropriate for children. Websites with games and teaching tools are just as accessible to children as are sites with pornographic material or violent content. Of even more concern, is that we have been observing the normalization of this kind of content by our children through the behaviours that they sometimes exhibit. Their continued exposure to these kinds of harmful material no longer seems strange to many of them and they have in many ways become desensitized to things which they are too young to fully comprehend and rationalize. Additionally, our children do not always make the best choices when they post things to social media platforms such as Facebook or Instagram, for example, and often they do not understand that what they post can lead to serious problems for them, whether now and/or in the distant future.



Given this, it is important for parents to teach their children how to be wise users of the internet and social media. As parents we are our children's first protectors and guidance counselors. A part of the reality, however, is that cyberspace often feels like a strange place for many parents and/or caregivers and is often viewed as a space just for our younger more 'tech savvy' or technologically in tuned children. It can prove to be quite frustrating for many parents who do not understand how to effectively engage with the online environment and for whom social media platforms as well as their accompanying terminology are foreign and unfamiliar territory.

Merging parenting and the world of technology can often be difficult and it is for this reason that the Office of the Children's Advocate conceptualized, designed and created the **Be Social...Be Smart** Social Media Manual. We recognize that a valid argument can be made that social media platforms and smart phones have and will continue to make raising our children that much harder, but at the same time discouraging their online engagement should not be the approach. Rather, we must equip our children with the tools which will allow them to navigate the online space more effectively and responsibly. We should encourage moderation for children in the amount of time that they spend online so that there is still time for interaction

with family as well as other beneficial activities. These will go a far way in affirming the child's self-worth, which no number of 'likes' and 'shares' online can replace. We must also ensure that our children understand the rules which govern their social media presence, if they are allowed to have one, and the potential dangers which they may encounter along with the relevant cyber safety tools which they should employ at all times.

Online and social media platforms are here to stay and as such safety in the online world must be a discussion that is had early on with your child. In order to have meaningful discussion with children on this topic, parents and caregivers must see themselves as integral to this area of safety. Time and interest must also be taken by parents to learn about the internet and social media, even in a very basic way to at least allow them to have functional literacy. Keep abreast with your child's online persona - his or her safety may depend on it. This Guide will assist you in this endeavour; we have highlighted how the Jamaican child uses these platforms and how (s)he perceives them (among other things) and have offered practical and useful tips for both parents and children alike which all promote safety within cyberspace. I commend its use to you as we all strive to **Be Social...Be Smart.**





ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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A great thank you is also expressed to the OCA staff and team which pulled together to execute this project:

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Thank you must also be expressed to the OCA's Children's Advisory Panel members who so happily provided guidance and feedback on the survey component as well as guidance on the tips developed for children.



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

SOCIAL MEDIA TERMINOLOGY

BFF – Best Friends Forever

BRB – Be right back

BTW – By the way

DM – Direct Message

F2F – Face to face

FB – Facebook

FBF – Flashback Friday

FYI – For your information

G2G – Got to go

Gr8 – Great

HBD – Happy birthday

HBU - How about you

HMU – Hit me up

IDC – I don't care

IDK – I don't know

IG – Instagram

IKR – I know, right

IMO – In my opinion

JK – Just kidding

L8 – Late

LOL – Laughing out loud

OMG – Oh my God

OOTD – Outfit of the day

PPL – People

RT – Retweet

TMI – Too much information



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PREFACE

Technology has afforded children (both teenagers and the younger ones) a means of escape to various spaces; a digital world in which they can, not only interact with others of similar age and backgrounds, but also others whose intentions may not be as innocent. Coupled with this fact, are the varying influences to which teens and children are exposed, many of which are sometimes not age appropriate and in fact can have quite detrimental impacts on our children's development.

Undoubtedly, our young ones today spend a lot of time on the internet, and invariably time spent on this medium tends to grow with the age of the child. Communication via the internet has seen an upsurge with the advent of social media platforms. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Tumblr, and Tagged are just a few of the social networking websites with which our children interact. Added to these are instant messaging applications such as WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, Snapchat and WeChat. The reach therefore

which our children now have to interact with complete strangers has been reduced significantly to a simple click of the mouse (or touchpad) or a tap of a phone screen. Distance in the digital world almost does not matter much anymore and with some parents/guardians far less tech savvy than their children, the challenge for parents to keep up is overwhelming.

The Internet is a powerful tool, and one which has added immense value to the human existence. Nevertheless, it is important to practice some safety measures when using this technology. Having an understanding of the responsibility that comes with the use of the internet is also integral to safety. The consequences of an error in judgment online can be serious and may have long term and lasting negative impacts. Through this social media guide, the OCA intends to assist and empower both you and your family to use the Internet and enjoy all the positive benefits it offers, while as best as possible minimizing any negative outcomes from its use by your children. The OCA therefore encourages you to keep this guide close and to use it to help educate yourself and your family about how to safely navigate this vast platform, the internet.



INTRODUCTION

There are numerous positives about the internet and social media — but also many potential dangers involving people and unsolicited content which you would want your children to avoid. Depending on the age and level of maturity of your child, they may not always make the most appropriate decisions, and thus, it is incumbent on you as parents to provide that enabling environment in which you can be involved in your child's activities while allowing them to feel safe to discuss any issue with you which they may not be able to handle on their own.

Through the use of Information Communication Technologies (ICT's), children can be introduced to valuable information, as well as different values, ideas and opportunities beyond those of their family. This kind of interaction can help to position the child as a global citizen of the world with a greater appreciation for the differences which exist within it.

However, most ICT's are still a medium which many adults do not fully understand or access in the same way. Such unfettered

exposure to varying unfiltered content by our children can also have an equally opposite negative effect, with the potential to transform good behaviours into bad ones. It is important therefore, for parents to seek to become directly engaged with ICT's or at least effectively communicate with their children about their online experiences and consequently impart age appropriate and effective online safety management tips.

Given this, it is important to understand these general principles about the internet and social media as well as the use of smart phones by both parents and children. This Social Media Guide by the Office of the Children's Advocate aims to assist you in this regard and is divided into three (3) main parts. Part One presents to you the findings garnered from the social media survey that was administered to children in grades 7-12 across the island; Part Two focuses on the importance of online safety and in Part Three we share practical tips for both adults and children.



THE POSITIVES OF THE INTERNET AND SOCIAL MEDIA



Internet and Social media can help children to:

- Communicate with others who share similar interests further developing their social skills
- stay connected with friends and family
- engender a spirit of volunteerism and participation through reading about local and global issues online
- as well as enhance their creativity through the sharing of ideas, music, and art

However, while these positive things can be accrued, parents and/or guardians are always encouraged to help their children navigate these spaces by visiting appropriate sites together. Making a decision about which sites are appropriate can often be difficult, but one can also be guided by age restrictions and/or classifications, the presence or absence of violent and sexual content as well as looking into who creates the content (can this

person be a role model for my child?) are all things to consider.

*Always Err on the side of Caution:
Things to keep in mind when
using the Internet and Social
Media*

While one would wish for our children to be exposed to only positive things, as with many thing in life there is sometimes also a bad side. Unfortunate occurrences such as cyber bullying and exposure to inappropriate content (of a violent or sexual nature) are some of the many things with which our children must contend when 'surfing' the internet. Indeed, even our children sometimes can make decisions about sharing content online, which they should not, sometimes revealing far more about themselves and their family than they should.

Possible negatives: photos, videos, and comments shared online usually cannot be taken back once they're posted. This is especially troubling if the content can cause another person harm or is false. Posting





an inappropriate photo can harm someone's reputation in ways that may cause problems years later — such as when a potential employer does a background check. Spending too much time on social media can also cause a child to become withdrawn, focusing only on the virtual world and decreasing face to face contact and socializing.



The Smart Phone and Today's Children

Being in constant communication with peers is of great significance to today's children and the smart phone provides an excellent medium through which this can be done. Traditional calling through the service provider was once the best way to keep in touch, now this has been replaced by third party calling applications over Wi-Fi or data plans, as well as text messaging.

With smart phones allowing one the capability to not only access the Internet and check emails in real time but also to utilize a myriad of applications to instant message, share videos and images as well as download and stream music in

real time, the smart phone has become the 'all in one' device so to speak. In fact the ability to access information too, through Google and other popular search engines would make the computer all but obsolete had it not been for the still very convenient way it allows for the presentation of assignments and other information. Even more importantly, this shift to the heavy usage of the smart phone means two very important things. Firstly, gaining access to the internet is no longer limited to times when the child is at home and can use the family computer as data plans are very cost effective these days even for a child receiving only lunch money. Secondly, the smart phone has also made it harder for parents to track the online activities of their children (while at school and especially at night when the child is alone in their room). Nevertheless, parents also see this device as a necessity which assists them to keep in touch with their children.

However, the Internet through smart phone applications has also ushered in a new age of risk exposure, especially for that of children. This kind of vulnerability can be further exacerbated if parents are not able to effectively engage with these kinds of ICT's. If parents lag behind in this regard, it is more difficult for them to access what the potential dangers on the internet may be for their child and ultimately guide them through this space.





1 PART



PART 1



SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHILD ABUSE: FINDINGS FROM THE OCA ADOLESCENT INTERNET (SOCIAL MEDIA) AND SMART PHONE APPLICATION USAGE SURVEY



PART ONE

Findings from the OCA Adolescent Internet (Social Media) and Smart Phone Application Usage Survey

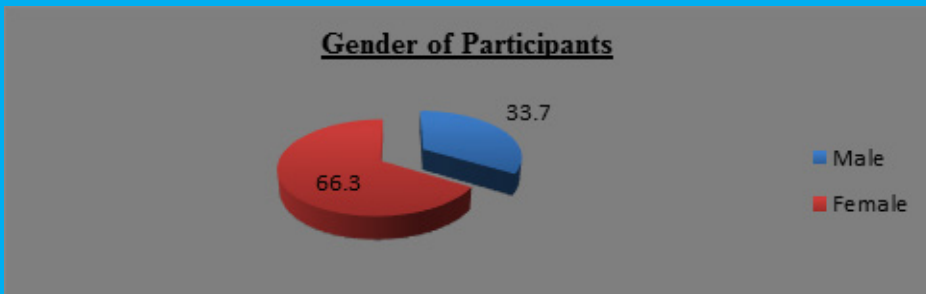


Figure 01: Percentage of male versus female participants who participated in the study

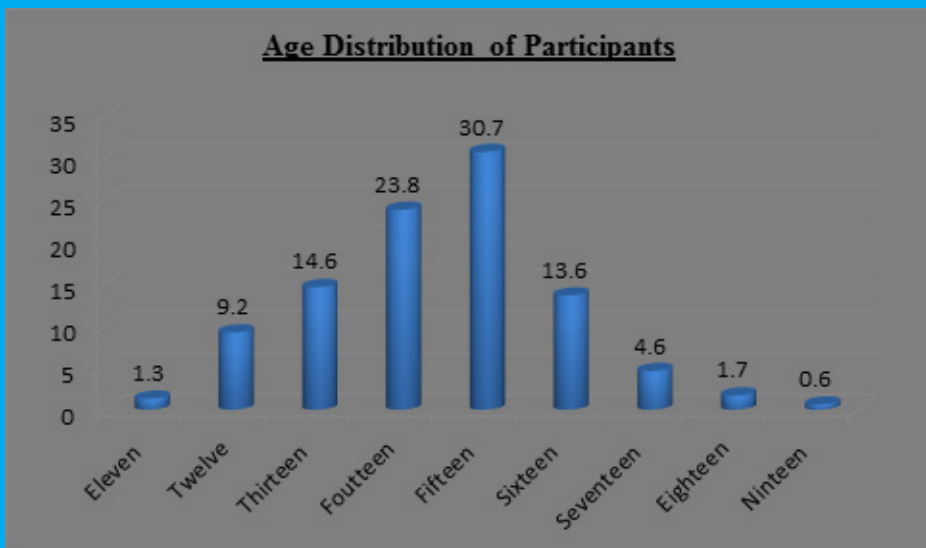


Figure 2: Indicates the percentage of students in the study in different age categories

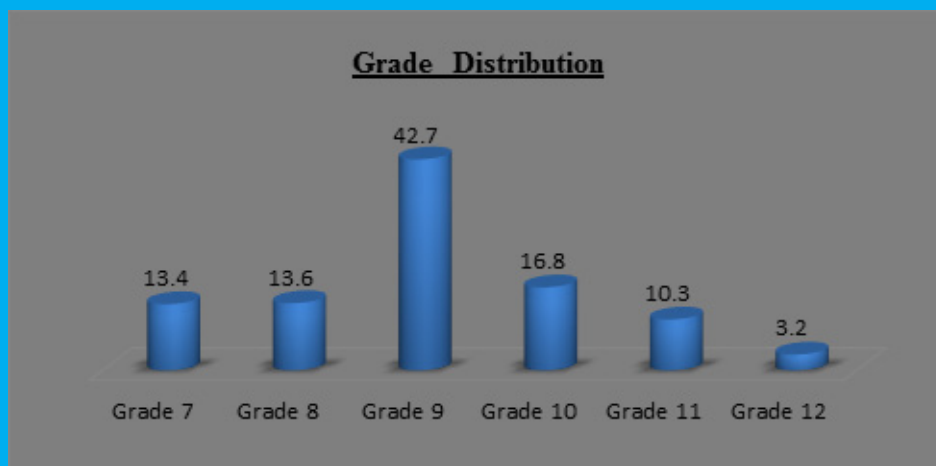


Figure 3: Depicts the grade composition of the respondents who participated in the study

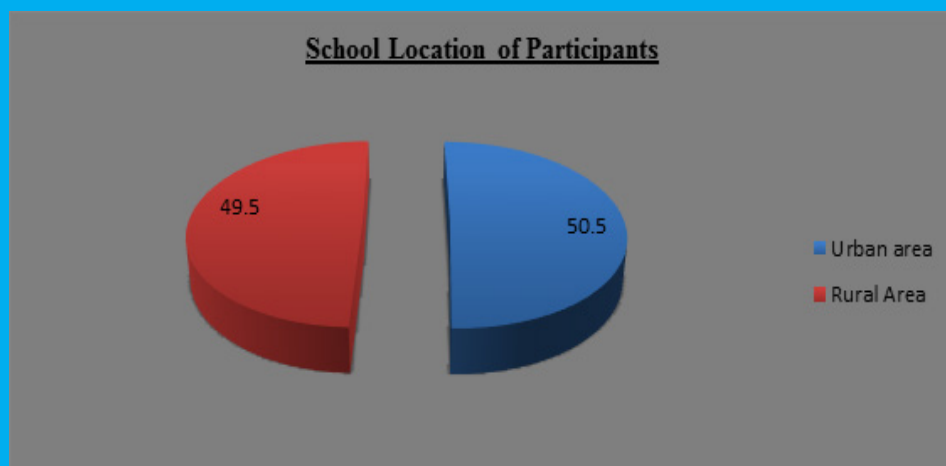


Figure 4: Highlights the percentage of student participants who attended rural versus urban schools

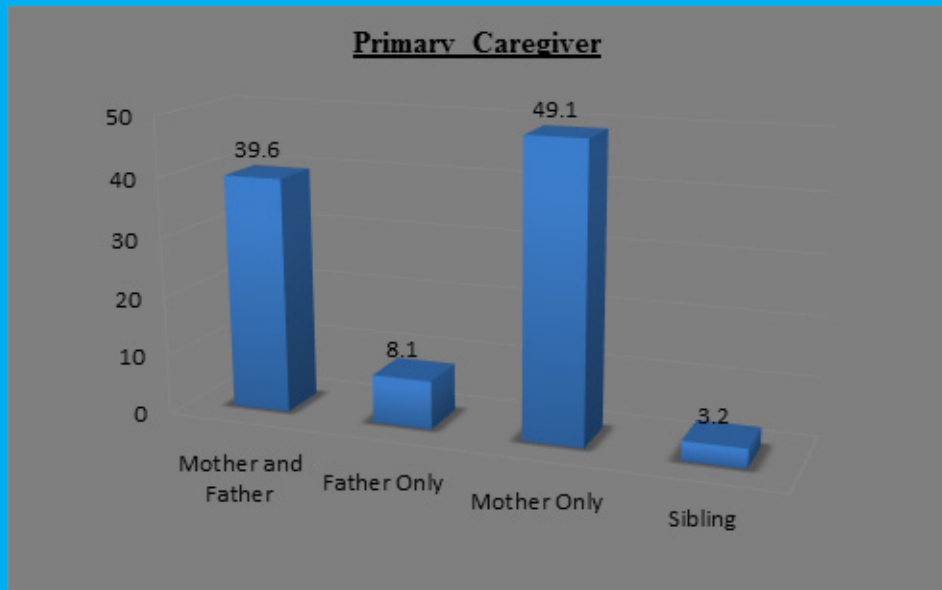


Figure 5: Indicates the residential status of the participants in the study

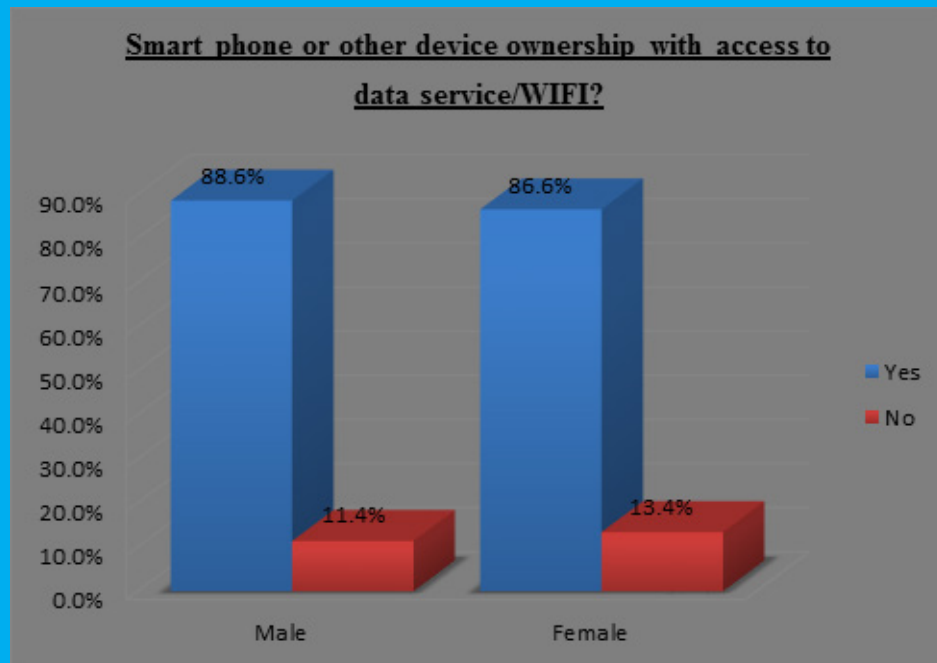


Figure 6: Percentage of male and female student participants who own a smartphone or other device with access to data service or WiFi

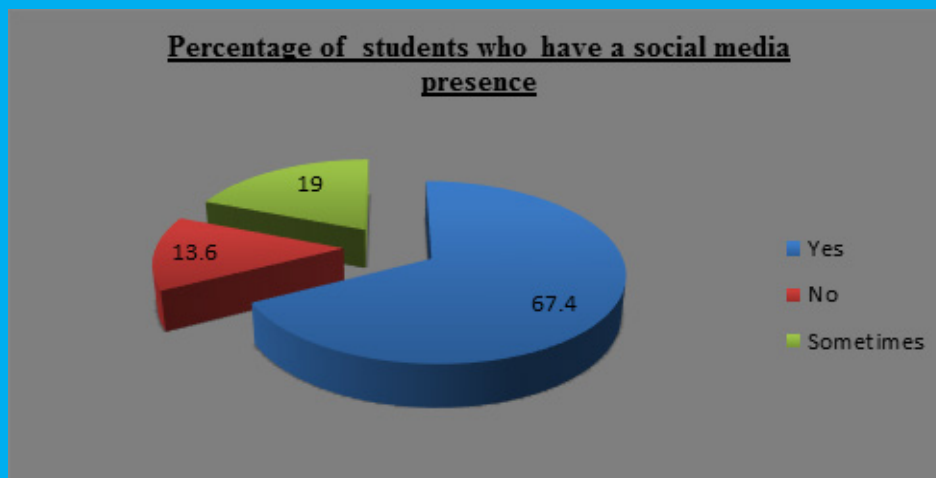


Figure 7: Shows the percentage of students surveyed who indicated they were members of at least one social media platform

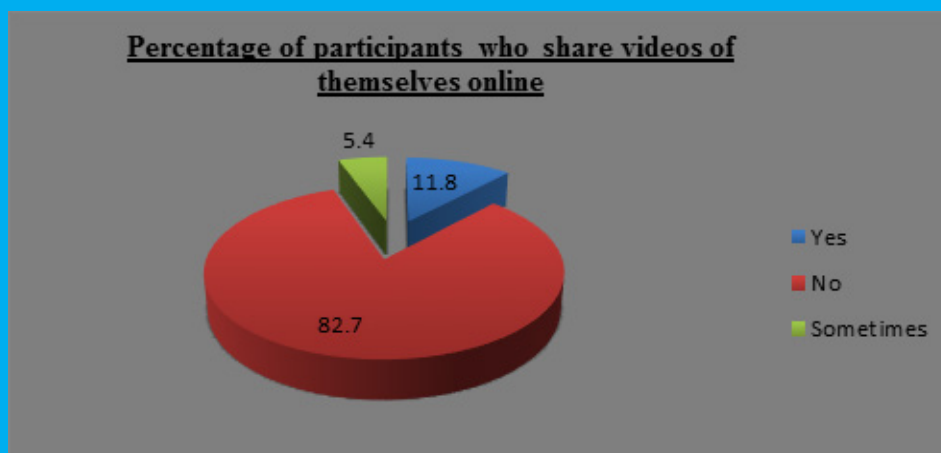


Figure 8: Illustrates graphically the percentage of students who share videos of themselves online

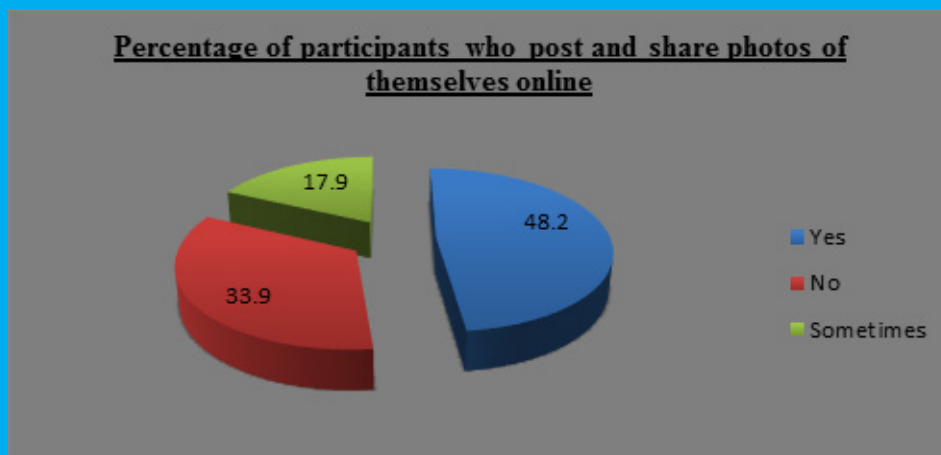


Figure 9: Shows the percentage of student participants who indicated that they have shared photos of themselves online through their social media pages.

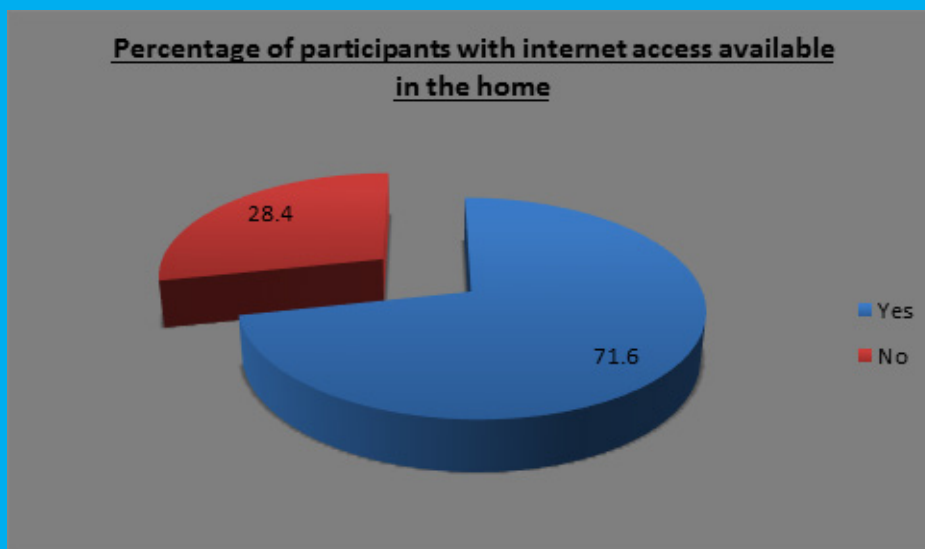


Figure 10: Shows the student participants who have access to the internet at home

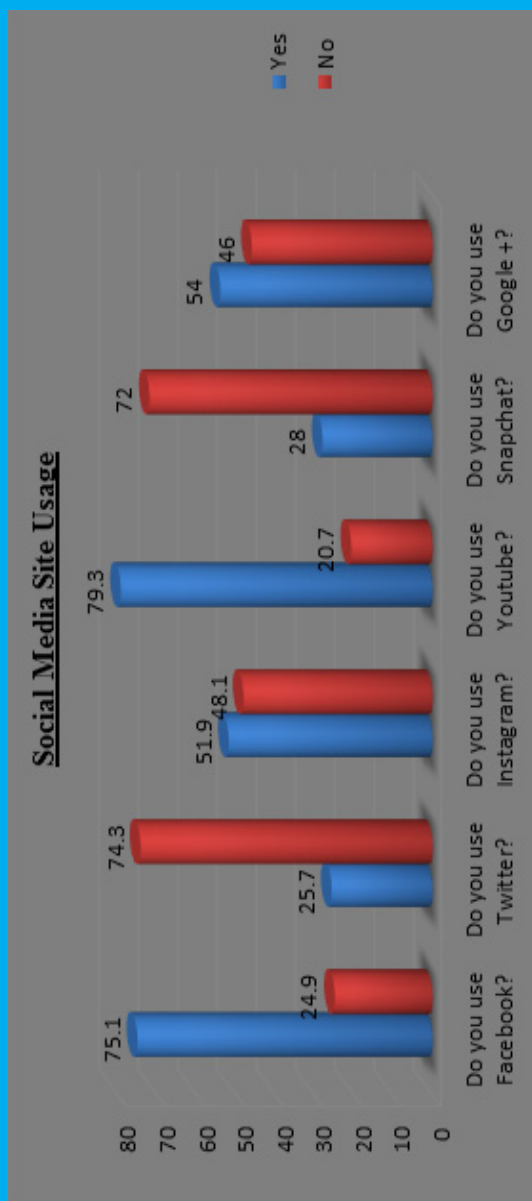


Figure 11: Illustration of the percentage of participants who utilize specific social media platforms

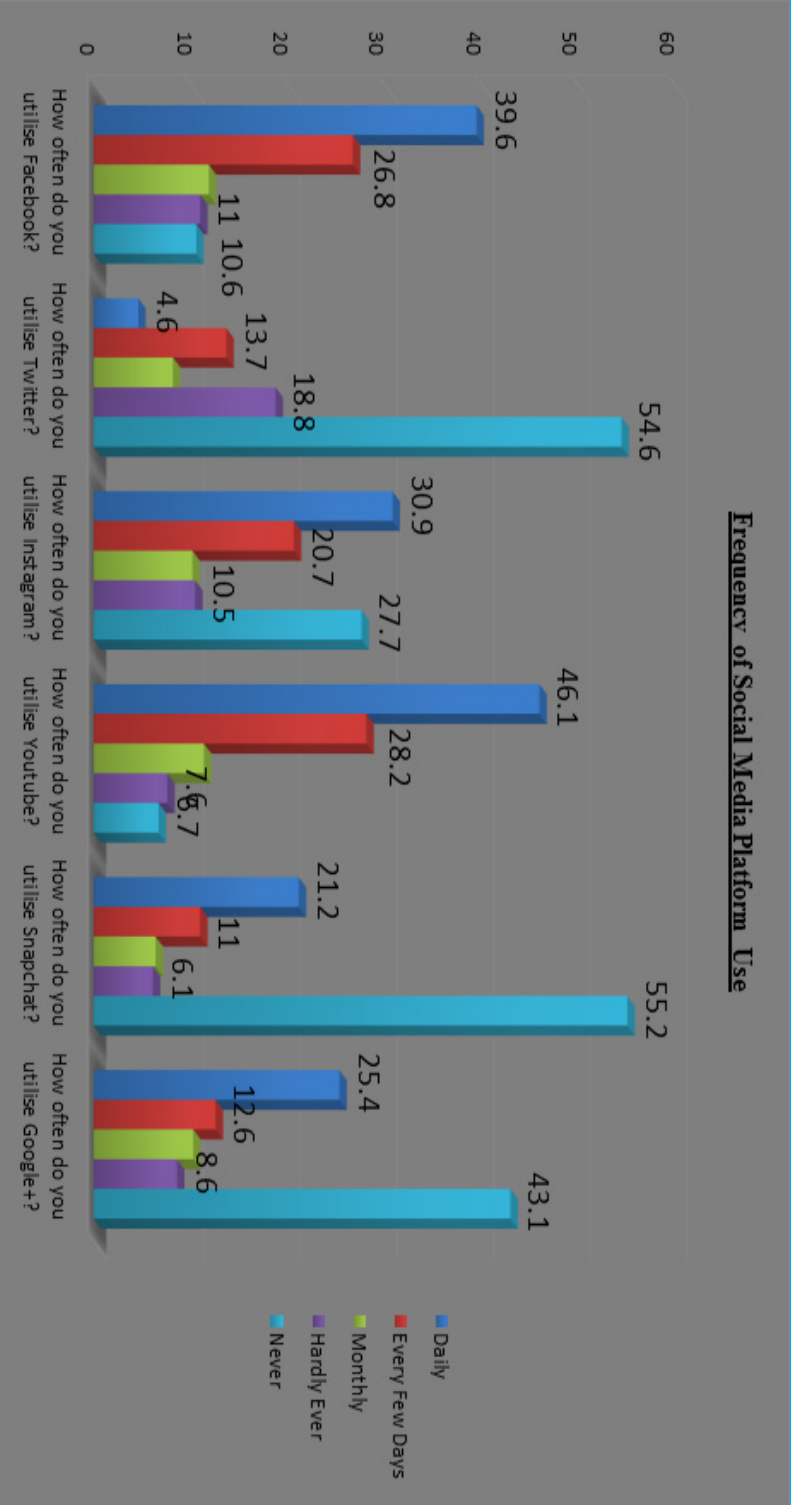


Figure 12: Percentage of participants who utilize each platform and their frequency of visit

Postings on Social Media

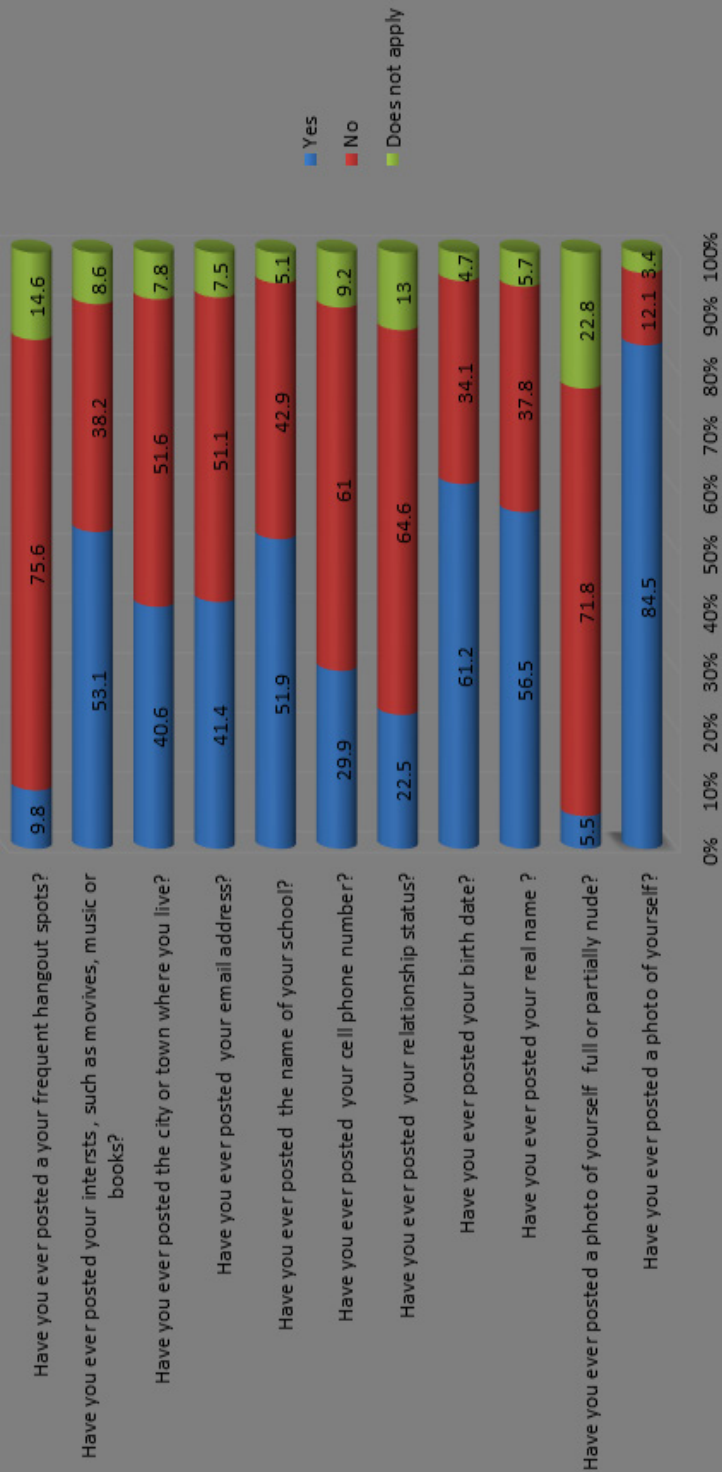


Figure 13: Diagrammatic representation of some of the kinds of activities and their frequency as stated by participants in the study

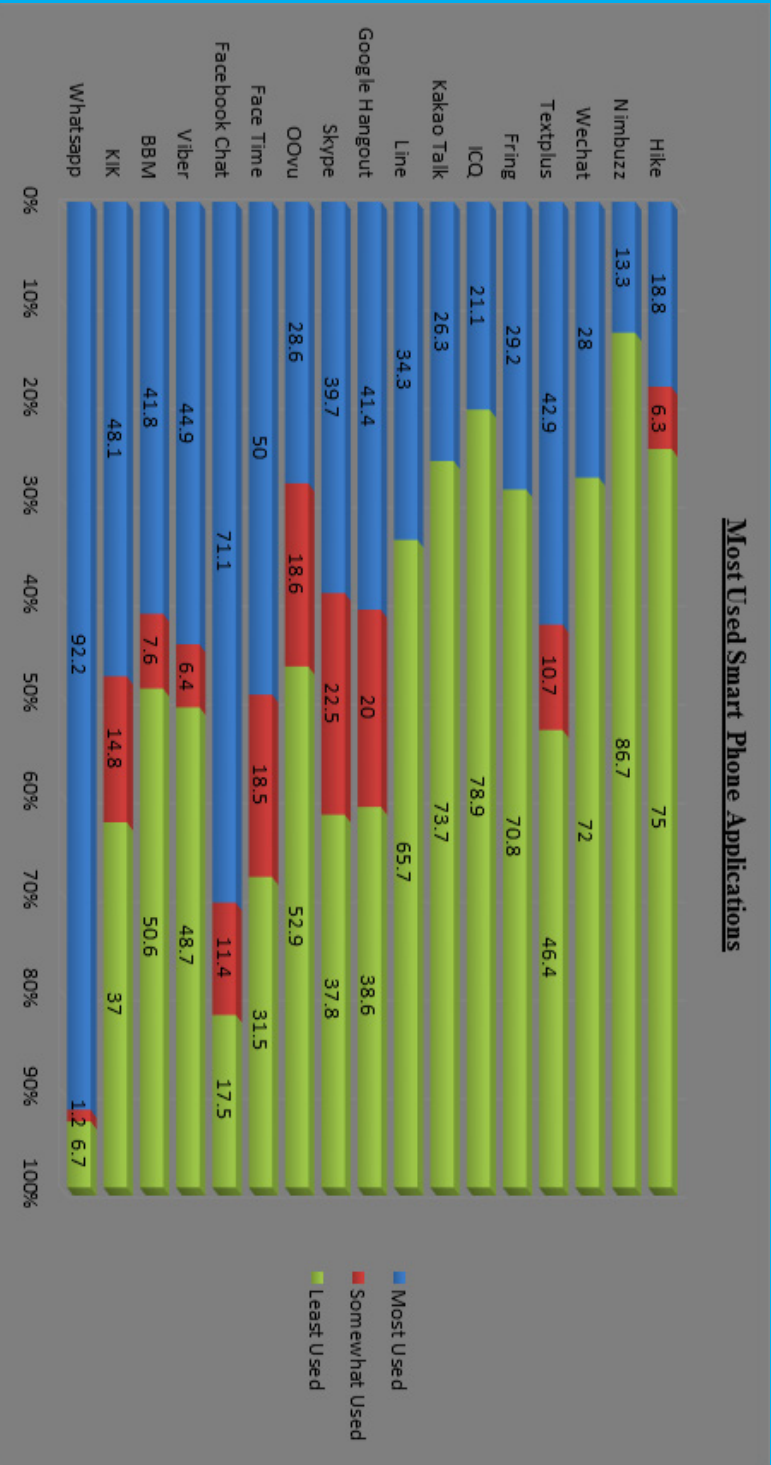


Figure 14: Shows the frequency with which student participants utilize each smart phone application

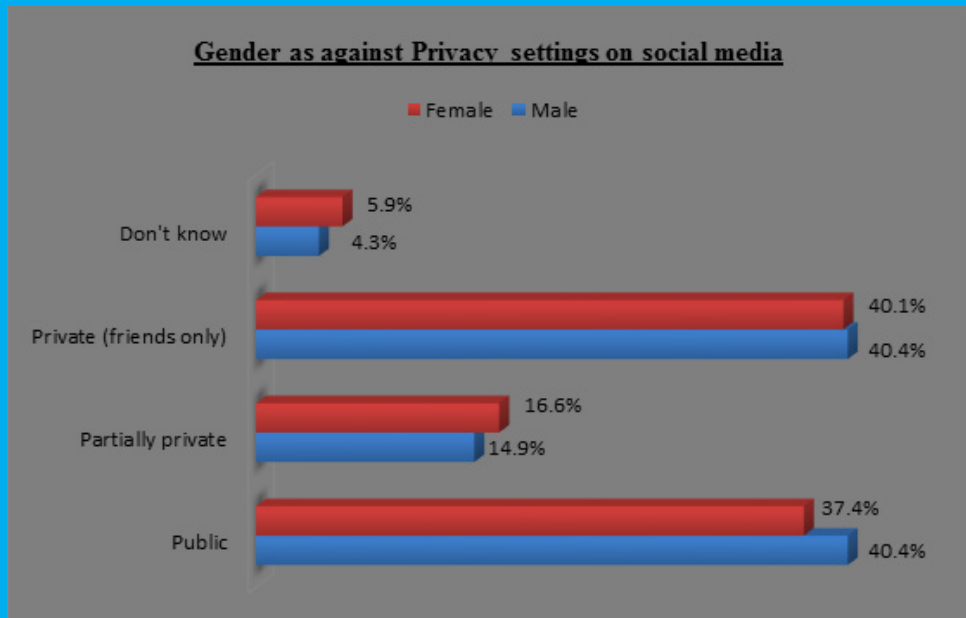


Figure 15: Percentage of male and female students indicating their social media profile privacy setting

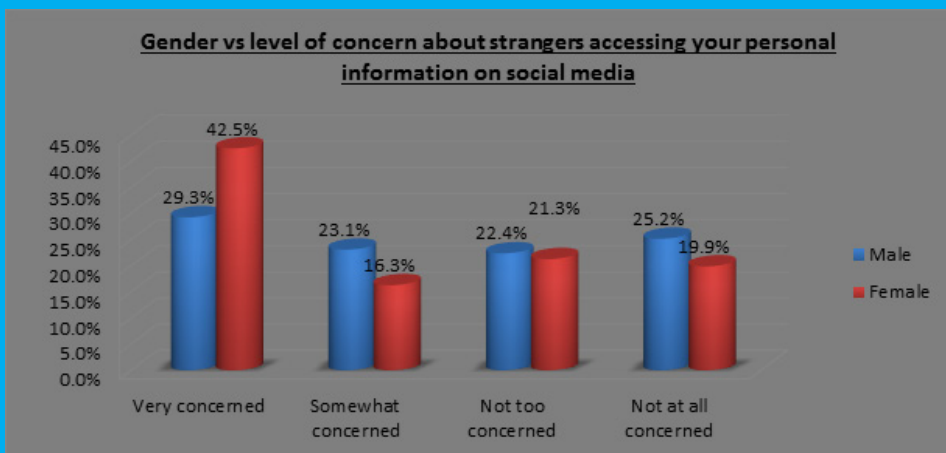


Figure 16: Above is depicted the level of concern children expressed in relation to strangers having access to their personal information

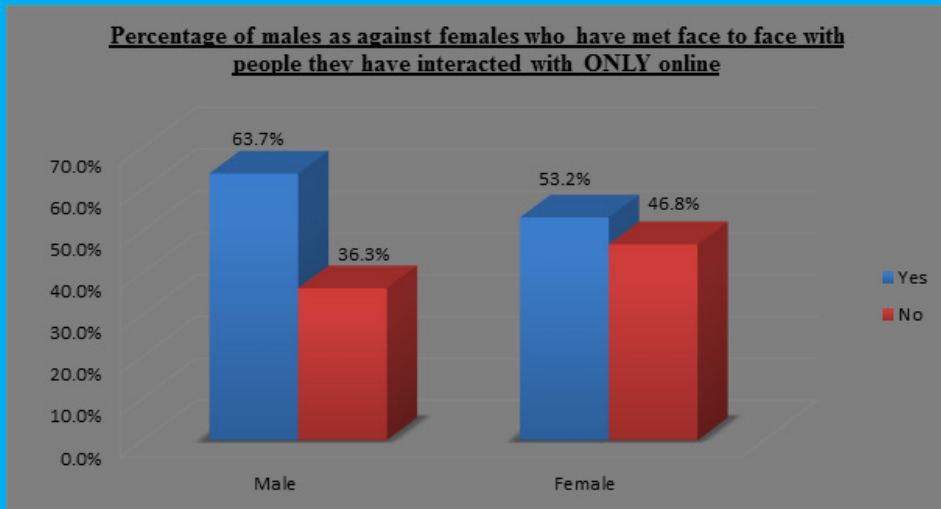


Figure 17: Descriptive representing the percentage of male versus female students who have had face to face meetings with people they have met online

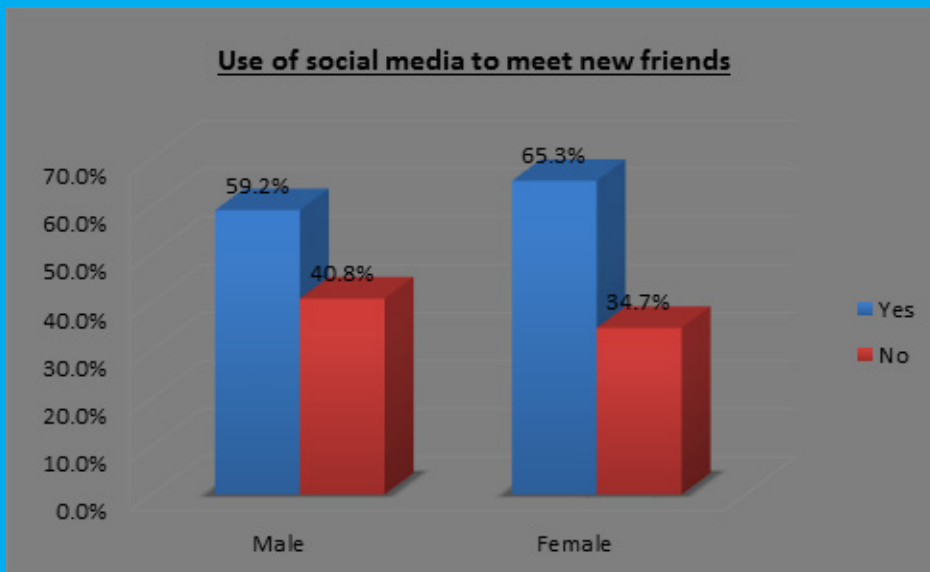


Figure 18: Percentage of male versus female students who utilize social media as a means of meeting new friends

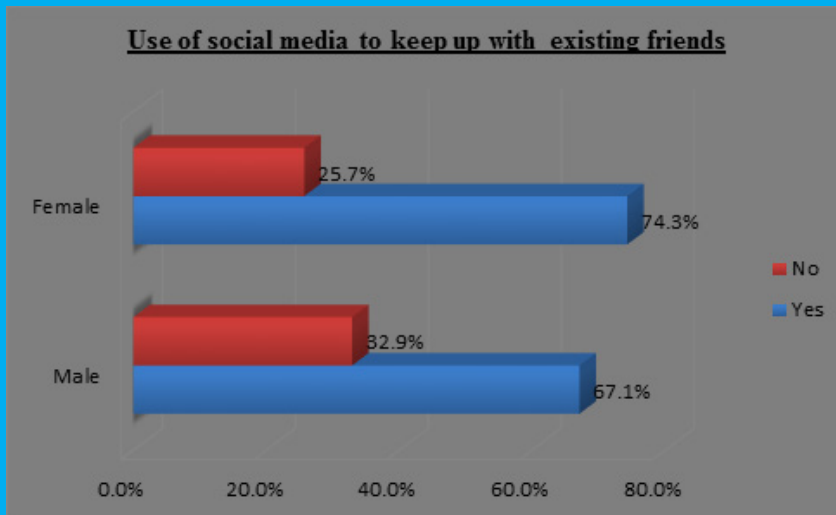


Figure 19: Percentage of female and male students who use social media platforms to follow the activities of real life friends

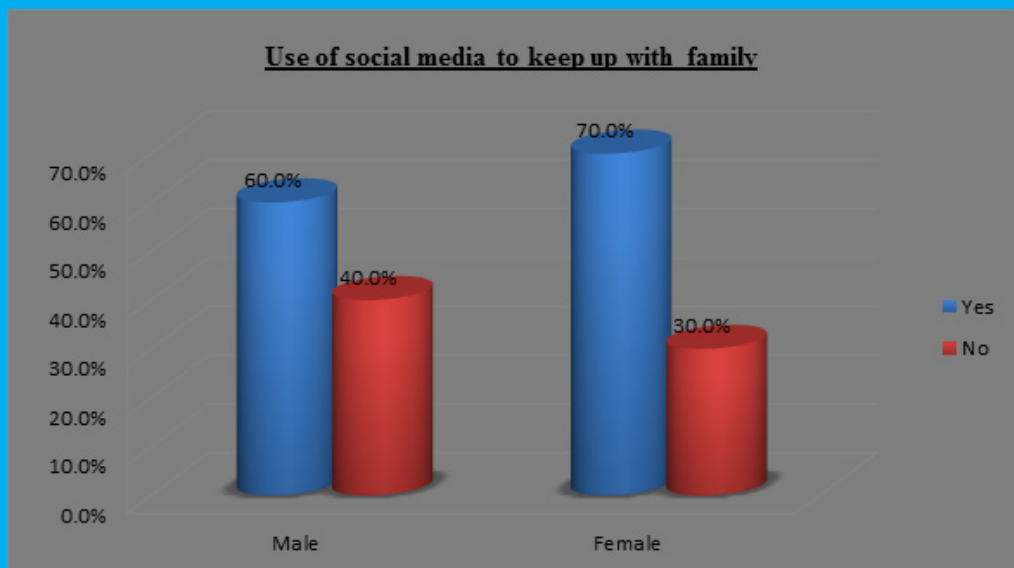


Figure 20: Percentage of students who use their social media to keep abreast with family members

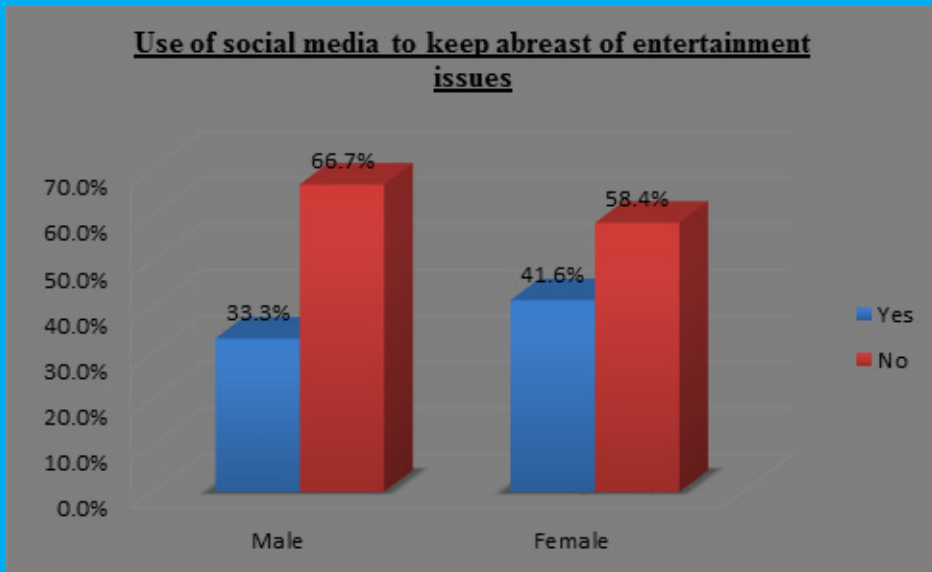


Figure 21: Percentage of participants who engage with social media for the purpose of keeping up with entertainment issues

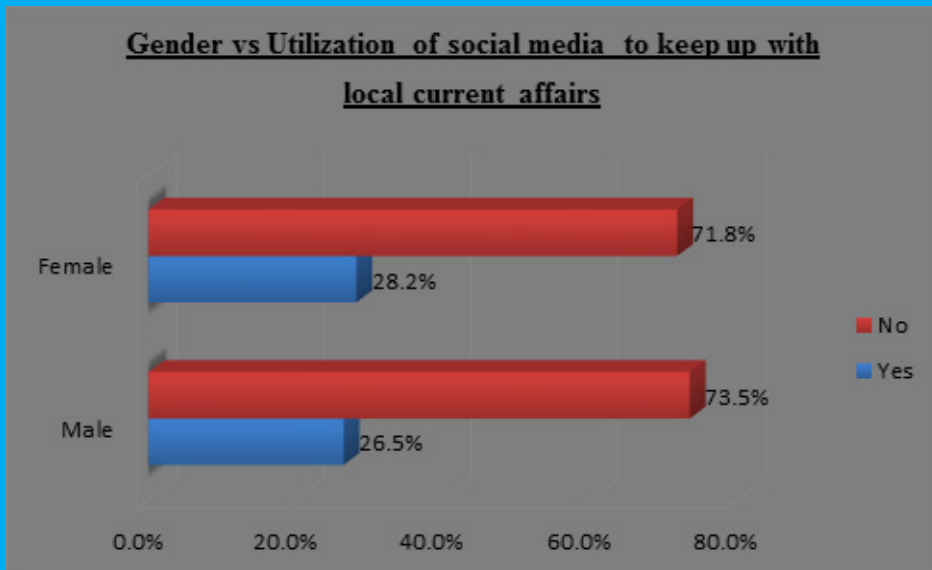


Figure 22: Percentage of students, male and female, who use social media as a way to follow current affairs locally

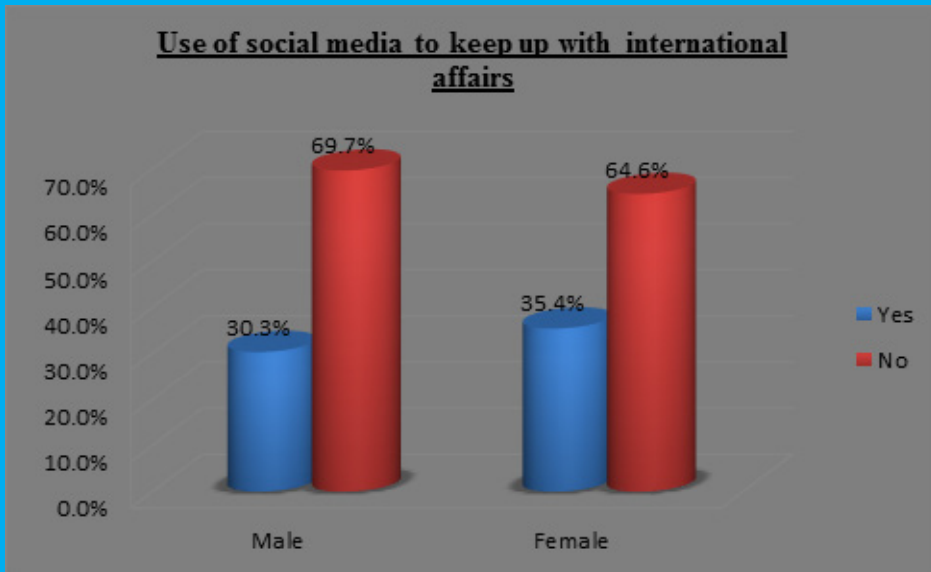


Figure 23: Percentage of respondents who use social media to keep up with international

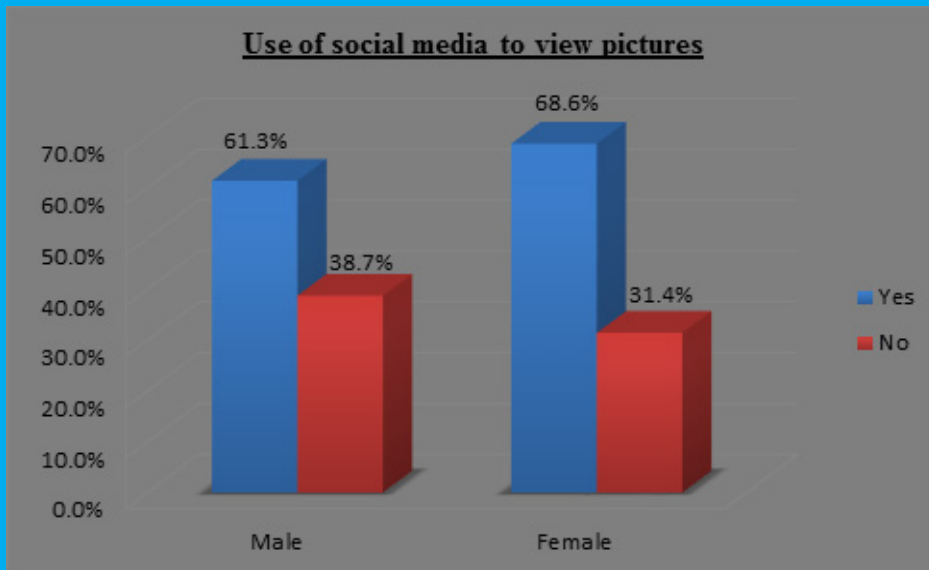


Figure 24: Percentage of students who use their social media platforms to view pictures

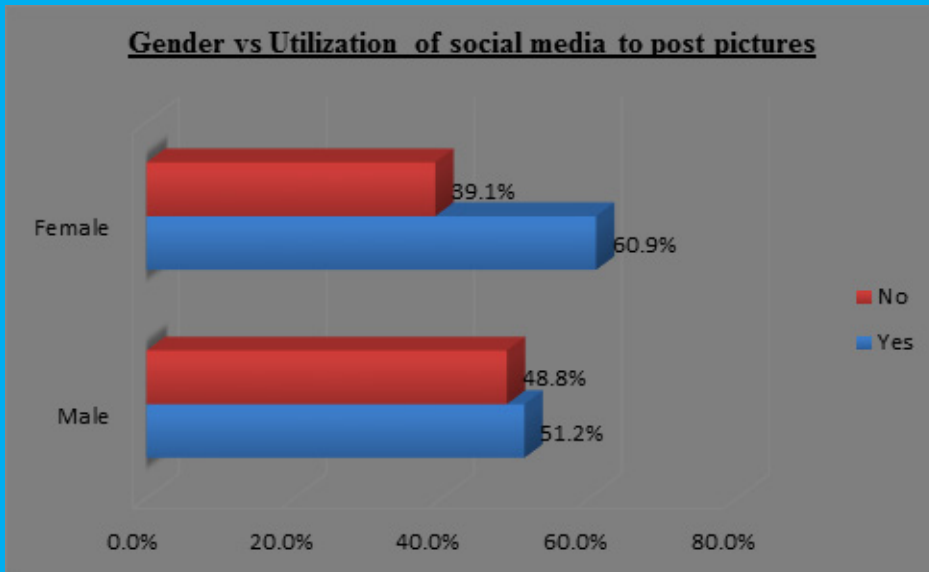


Figure 25: Percentage of students who use their social media to post pictures

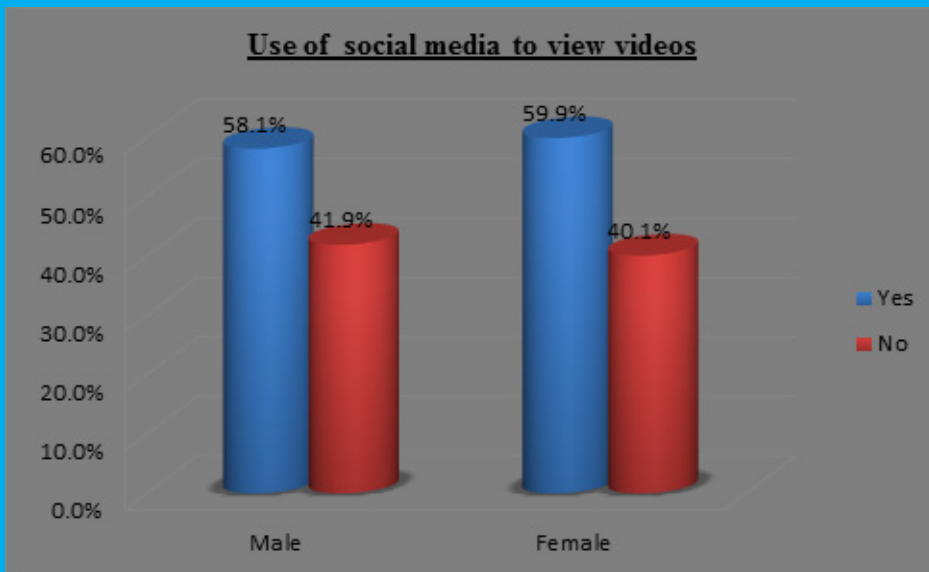


Figure 26: Percentage of students who use social media to watch videos

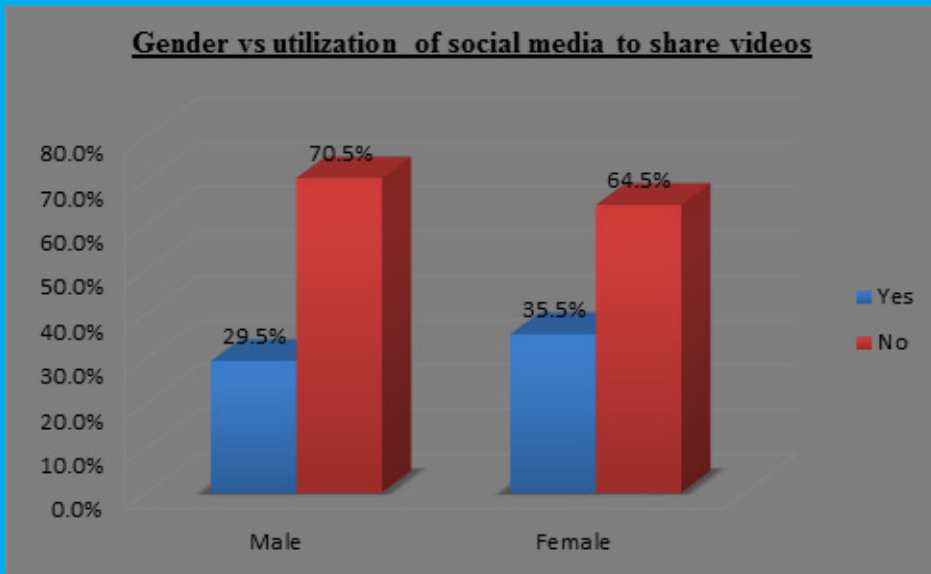


Figure 27: Percentage of participants who use social media to share videos

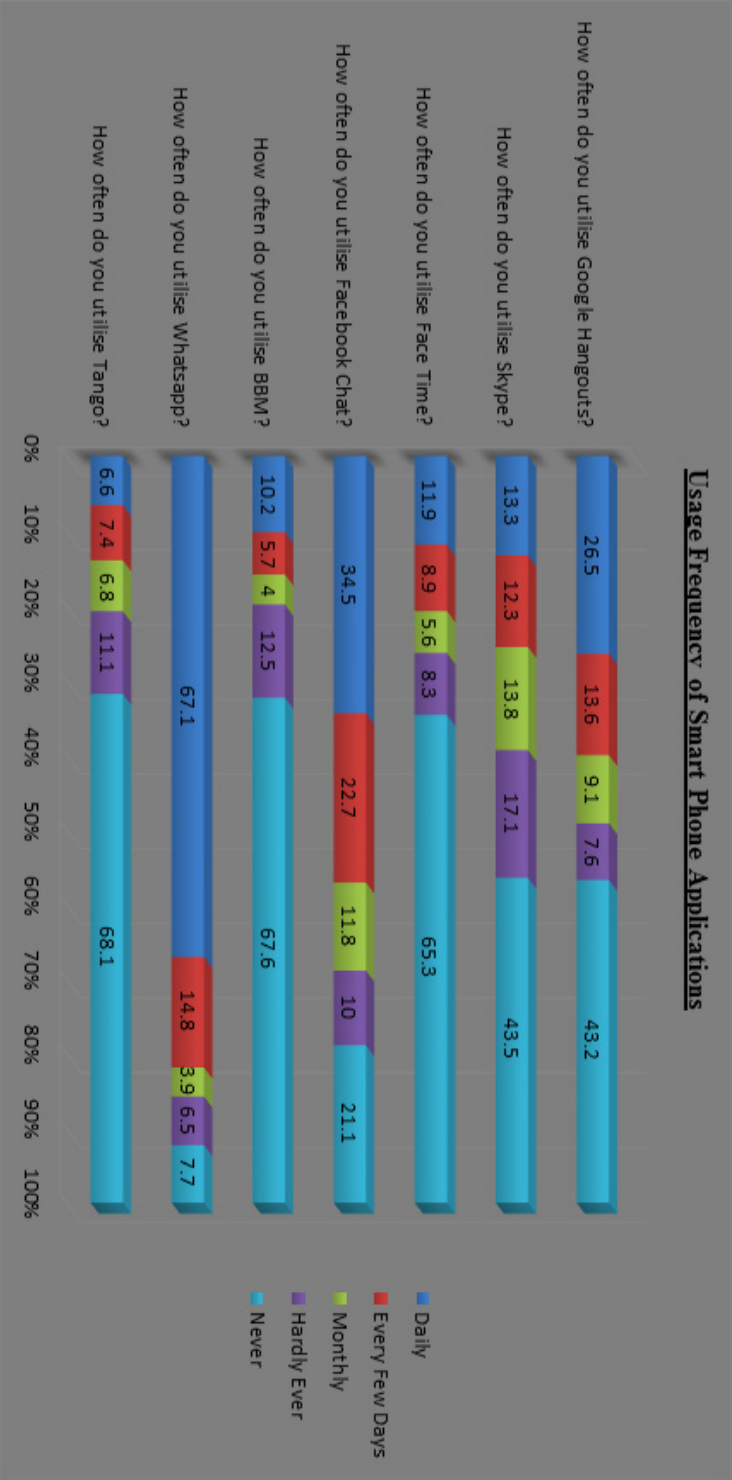


Figure 28: Illustration of the frequency of usage of smart phone applications by students

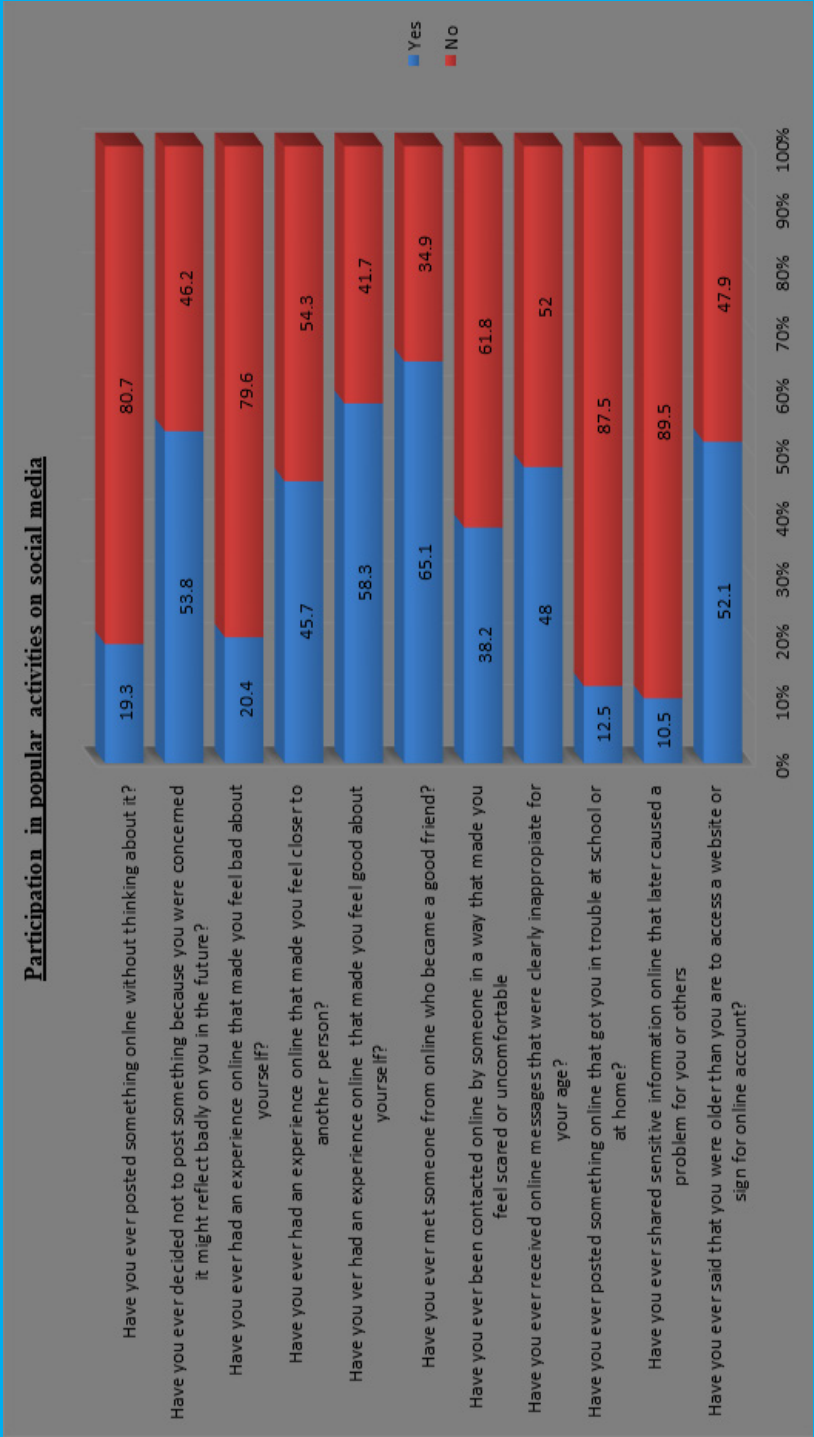


Figure 29: Percentage of participants who have engaged in various activities on social media

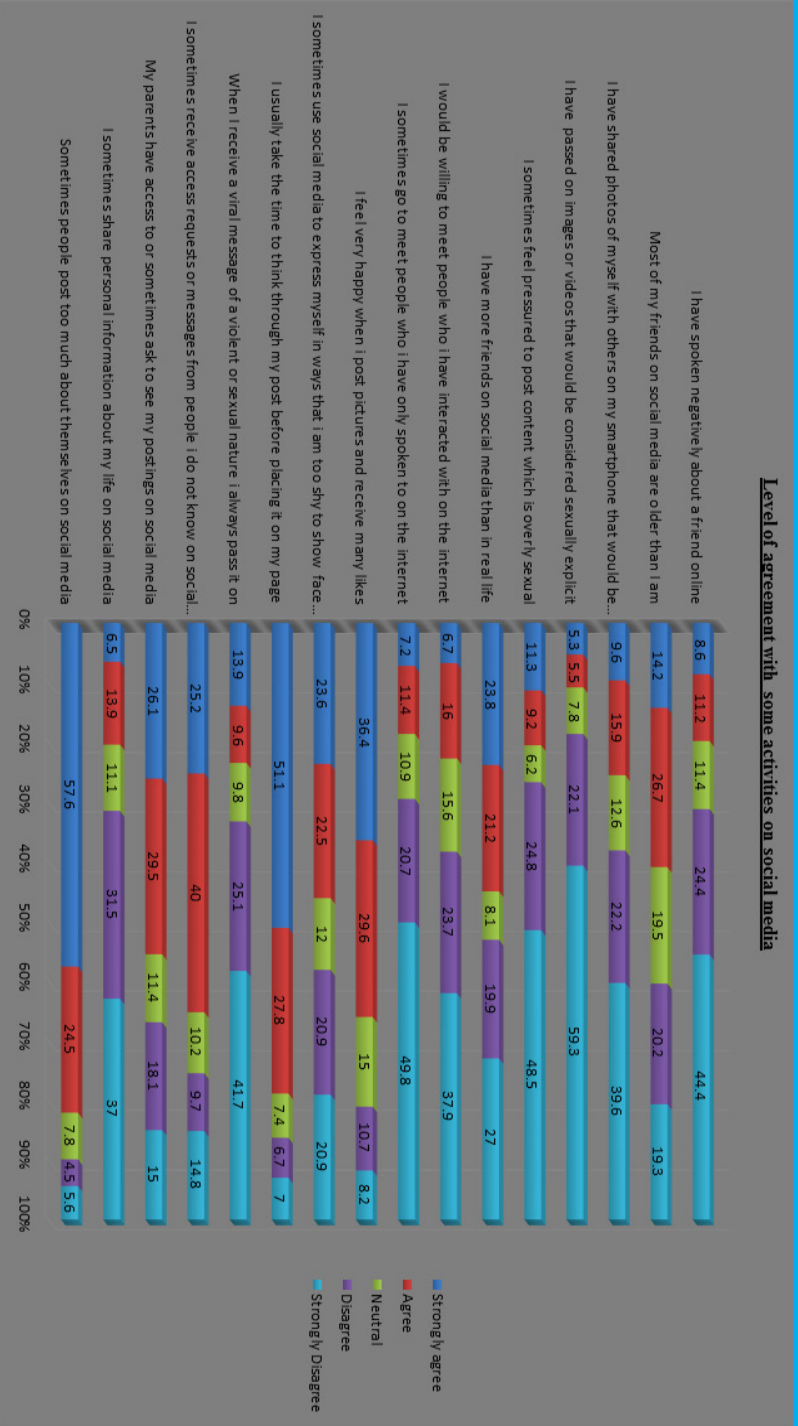


Figure 30: Level of agreement expressed by respondents to participation in popular activities on social media

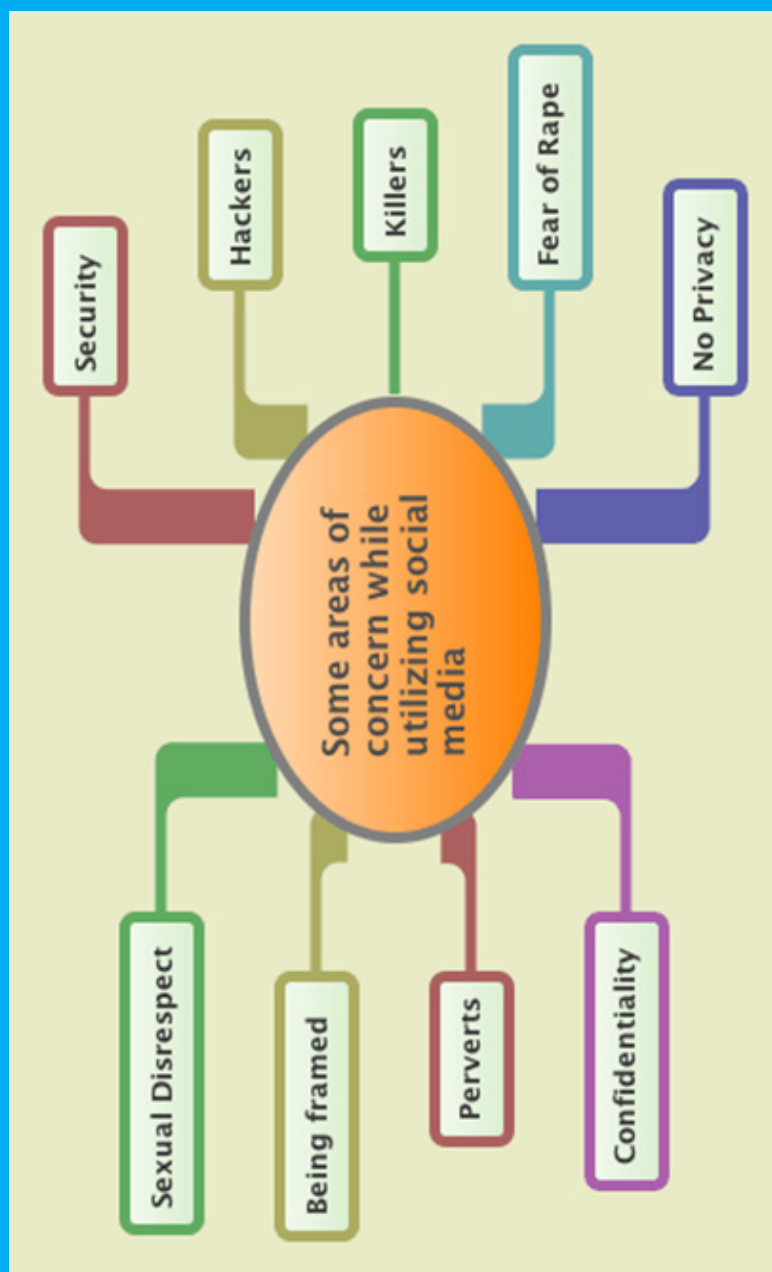


Figure 3.1: Thematic areas relating to concerns students expressed about sharing things on social media to which strangers may have access to





PART 2



PART 2



THE IMPORTANCE OF ONLINE SAFETY





PART TWO

The Importance of Online Safety

While the internet remains a powerful information and educational resource, safety in the online domain should be of concern to all who use this space, whether for leisure or for the purposes of business. As it relates to the use of this space by children, the level of concern and the type of concerns are somewhat different when looking through the lens of a parent. While utilizing the online space is a necessity, it is important to keep in mind that there are online predators as well as a myriad of content to which our children may come into contact with. Given this situation, parents must ensure that they remain knowledgeable about current system security features for all devices in an effort to minimize any incidence of exposure for their children.

The Internet is a space which many child predators often utilize as a means of gaining access to potential child victims by exploiting their innocence. These predators will often

spend their time seeking children who they see as vulnerable; children who may exhibit traits of low self-esteem and potentially children who they may access. A good example is provided by children who may have been previously abused being targeted should they reveal certain in-depth information about themselves. Even if a child has not been abused, a predator may take the approach of that of a friend and try to build a strong rapport so as to get the child to reveal certain private and intimate details about themselves, their family and daily life. The possibility of a predator building a rapport with a child and developing a relationship of trust is very dangerous as this may allow for reciprocity. What this means is a predator may provide monetary gifts, or just some seeming emotional support and/or friendship to the child in





exchange for things from a child which he/she should not and are not allowed to give (for example, nude photos and/or other sexual favours).

Indeed, no parent wants their child to live in fear, however we must make our children aware that the world is filled with both good and bad people and ultimately equip them with the tools to recognize each and to guard themselves against the bad.

While sexual predators do not present the only kind of online danger to children, they are among the most common. It should also be noted that this does not only occur between much older men and younger girls (the converse for young boys and older women has also been observed, however it is believed this is highly underreported), as this has been increasingly observed between boys and girls of similar or close age. The practice of sexting has also become quite popular among older children (teenagers) who own or have access to smart phones. Many participants in the OCA's targeted focus group sessions, while not admitting to having sent nude photos, did admit to being on the receiving end of these kinds of content.

Solicitation of Children Online

Often the most scary and prevalent danger for children in

the online environment is that of falling prey to a sexual predator. This is especially true for children whose activities are not properly supervised when online (whether on a computer or via the smart phone). Children not effectively monitored and guided by parents may visit (whether knowingly or unknowingly) chat rooms, social media platforms or download applications which are more suited for adult engagement. However, predators may also immerse themselves in the spaces which are typically populated by children such as gaming websites where they may pose as teenagers or younger adults in order to meet and attract potential child victims.



*the internet is
a space with
which many child
predators...*

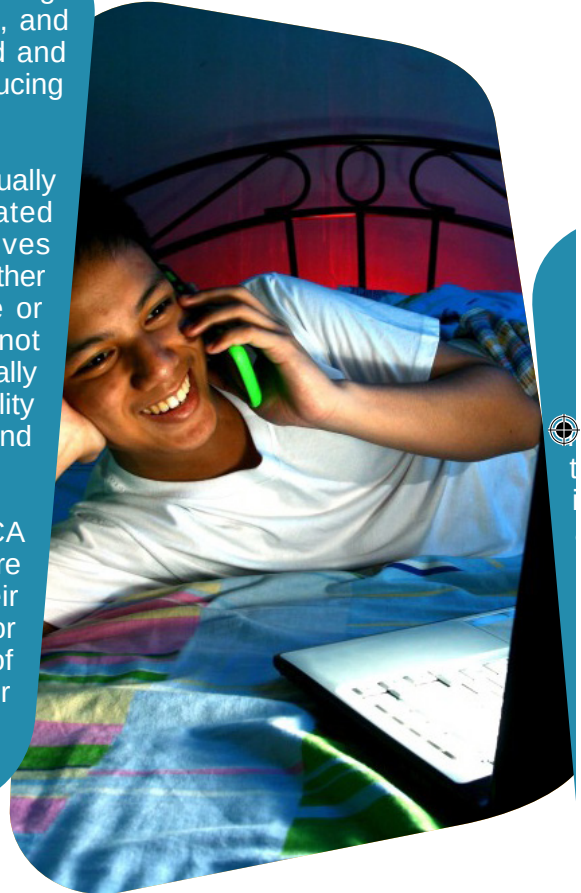
It is also essential to state that the internet has not given way to the crimes of predators and sexual solicitation of children, rather it has created new spaces and other avenues to access children. It has also increased avenues through which predators can disseminate as well as proliferate inappropriate content and conduct as well as widen the points of opportunity for recruiting child victims.



Generally speaking children who are potentially susceptible to being exploited on the internet fall into three main categories based on observations made by the OCA:

entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring the safety of a child be aware of these potential dangers and guide children as to how they can also play a role in protecting themselves.

1. Firstly, children who are very young and have been exposed to abuse, and this abuse has been photographed and or recorded for the purposes of producing child pornography
2. Secondly, children who are older (usually teenagers) and who have created sexualized content of themselves (pictures and/or videos) and then either post these images/videos online or share via text messaging, and not fully cognizant of how they potentially expose themselves to the possibility of sexual grooming, exploitation and unwanted solicitation.
3. Thirdly-and one which the OCA has received may reports of-where children become victims of their peers who either assault them or record evidence of some kind of sexual encounter and thereafter distribute this content online.



The potential ways in which our children may be exploited presented above (on the previous page) are just a few of the ways in which the vulnerabilities of children can be manipulated. It is therefore important for parents, caregivers, and those who are



Things to look for when a child is potentially having inappropriate interactions online

While there are a myriad of signs which may indicate that your child is interacting with a person(s) online in a way which they should not, below are just a few which may signal that you need to speak with your child about his/her associations:

01

INORDINATE AMOUNTS OF TIME SPENT ONLINE

If your child spends what you consider to be a copious amount of time on the internet, which does not obviously appear to include homework or regular child friendly activities such as playing games then this may be a cause for concern. If your child refuses to break away to have dinner or even have face to face time with friends, then you may need to have a conversation about the kinds of activities your child is engaged in online.

02

ODD HOURS OF THE NIGHT

If you also observe that your child is on the computer, tablet, or smart phone during typical bed time hours, this may be an indication that your child may not be speaking with his/her peers. As such, talking online should be encouraged to take place during hours and places where he/she can be properly supervised.

03

ODD PHONE CALLS

Should your child begin to receive calls or messages from persons whose name(s) you have never heard before or who your child expresses does not attend their school or who you know he/she would not have met at any typical place you frequent (for example a church group or club) then you should make serious enquiries about this person, their parents, and their family. If your child cannot give you clear and comfortable responses about this association then follow your instincts about whether or not the interaction should continue.



04

SWITCHING SCREENS

Should you notice that your child rapidly changes the active screen, turns off the monitor or closes their device when you come into the room, then it is likely that your child is viewing something or engaging with someone that they do not want you to be aware of. You should be assertive in asking your child to see what he/she is doing, however try to be calm when doing this and not respond angrily if you believe the content is not appropriate. Rather, take this time to properly address this issue with your child, ensuring that they understand why this kind of content is not for them and what you would prefer they take the time to view.

05

WITHDRAWAL FROM FAMILY OR FRIENDS

Predators in general will do their utmost to try and create a gap between a child and their family as well as friends. A predator may also seek to be the strongest influence in the child's life, even asking children to defy their parents. In doing so a predator is attempting to deepen the relationship between themselves and the child and ultimately try to diminish bonds between parents, family and their children. This is especially worrisome during teenage years when children tend to rebel and believe parents no longer understand them.



06

UNEXPLAINED SUMS OF MONEY

If you observe that your child is spending heavily on items which you know he or she cannot afford, is wearing items of clothing, gifts and/or jewelry you did not purchase and if you observe that your child seems to have large sums of money which did not come from you, then these may be the result of questionable activities. It should be noted therefore that in the process of sexual grooming, a predator may purchase items of gifts for a child in a bid to build trust, friendship as well as a sense of obligation to return favours.



It is important to remember too that while children are a vulnerable group, which increases their susceptibility to abuse, they also have their own instincts which we as parents and guardians must help them to tune into and further develop. It is important that they too, understand how they can help to protect themselves. However, we must also address the behaviours of those children who would also

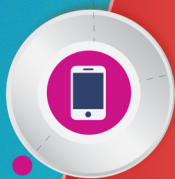
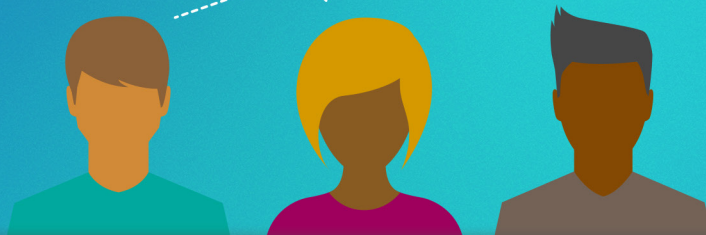
themselves act as perpetrators and potential abusers online. Indeed, the internet has shown us that children are not only victims, they can also be victimizers; and as such this is also a group which needs serious attention.







3 PART



STEPS TO IMPLEMENTING ONLINE SAFETY: TIPS FOR PARENTS AND CHILDREN

PART 3





PART THREE



Parents:

There are several ways in which parents can try to keep their children safe online if they do enough research. Indeed being aware of the varying mechanisms which exist to keep your child safe is integral not only for their online safety but also so that you as the parent can feel comfortable about their

interactions online. Undoubtedly, as a parent, you are your child's first and best protection against possible dangers online. In order to do so however, you must be cognizant, not only of the potential dangers but also of the means by which you can limit your child's exposure to them. It is important to educate yourself in order to teach your children how to Be Smart, Be Safe and





above all aware of the benefits of the online world but also its dangers.

No one knows or understands your child in the way you do, therefore, any guidelines you provide should remain age appropriate and ultimately be useful without instilling fear. Their use of the internet and the resulting vulnerabilities will vary as they get older, so any online safety strategies should be well thought out and agreed upon by both you and your child; taking into consideration just what and how much they can assimilate for their age.

to them from friends can also be harmful.



Talk to your children about:

- **Their Nicknames and Profiles:** Inform them that they should refrain from selecting provocative or easily identifiable nicknames. In addition, they should be discouraged from displaying personal information about themselves and family online.
- **Accepting, Receiving and Disseminating Data (Information):** Ensure that you instruct your children to be careful about the kinds of files they accept, download and/or share with others, especially if they were received from people they do not know. They should also be aware that files sent
- **The Online Stranger:** Children need to be reminded in your conversations with them about cyber space that speaking with strangers online can be dangerous. It is impractical to instruct them never to interact online with people they do not know. Instead, it may be best to tell them (especially for children below a certain age) that their online associations must be approved by you as the parent.
- **Appropriate Online Etiquette:** Children should be taught that their behaviour/conduct online is just as important as their behaviour presented in person. Impress upon your children that within the online space, they should always avoid making comments or posting graphics which may be derogatory or offensive.



Tips for Parents

Relying on software alone to do your job is a no no!!

Filtering and blocking programmes and/or applications should be a part of your Internet safety plan for the home and on your child's smart phone. However these actions, despite their value, cannot take the place of an informed and involved parent.

Think and plan ahead of time

The online space is vast and filled with both good and bad content. Bearing this in mind, you should talk with your children about the very real dangers which they may encounter within the online space. While you would not want your child to live in fear, the dangers of certain kinds of interactions online are very real and parents must prepare children in the event they come across this.



you may need to have a conversation about the kinds of activities your child is engaged in online.

Encourage and facilitate other interests

While time for leisure and play is a right of all children, time spent leisurely on the internet must

Always endeavour to be proactive

Take the time to learn about the internet and any available safety mechanisms which you can utilize. Attend cyber safety classes where available and engage other parents who have similar concerns; you may find within the group, at least one parent who knows enough about the internet who may be willing to teach other parents.

be controlled. Children should be encouraged to participate in other activities offline which are also excellent for self expression. Participation in community clubs and/or school clubs should be supported where possible. Parents should also take the time to have conversations with their children; encourage 'talk time' with your children in order to stimulate open dialogue and deepen familial as well as parental connection to your children.



In so doing, your child will know that the safest place to seek advice is in the home from the parent/guardian and will freely do so when it is needed.

Keeping the computer in sight

The family PC or laptop should be kept in an area where you as the parent can observe your child's activities. While some parents allow their children to keep the computer in their room, this should not be encouraged for children, especially for children below the age of 16.

threatening email, message, post, or text.

- **Always tell a parent about any communication or conversation that was scary.**
- **If your child has a new "friend," insist on being "introduced" online to that friend.**

The Basic Rules for Parents to Remember

Here are some simple things which we think you should tell your child to adhere to if they wish to maintain a presence online. Remind them that they should:

- **Never post or exchange personal photographs.**
- **Never reveal personal information, such as address, phone number, or school name or location. Use only a screen name. Never agree to meet anyone from a chat room or social media site in person.**
- **Never respond to a**

PARENTAL CONTROL TOOLS

The internet is growing at an exponential rate with more adult and harmful content becoming more easily accessible. In light of this, parents must monitor cell phones, gaming devices, PC's and laptops belonging to their children. Parents must try as best as possible to become familiar with the different technologies which children are exposed to so as to be in a position to guide them. Parents need not be technologically savvy in order to find out about the features that come with some of the technologies that exist.

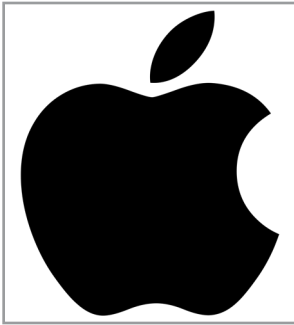
There are parent control tools and monitoring software that are available to parents that will allow you to manage all Internet-connected devices children use. The operating systems (software that manages computer hardware and software resources and provides common services for computer programs) on most Personal Computers and laptops have built-in parental controls features. Windows and Macintosh OS X allow you to manage just about every aspect of what your children can do on the PC and when surfing the internet. This built-in parental control feature has the option of restricting website access, allowing or blocking specific programs and setting up time limits. It is important to note however that in order to utilize the built-in parental control features you need to set up an individual user account for your children.

The following information will outline how you can access the built-in parental control features on windows and Macintosh Personal Computers.



Windows Users:

The parental controls are accessed through the Control Panel. Locate **User Accounts and Family Safety** then Parental Controls from **Control Panel**. There will be a listing of all created user accounts on the computer for you to select the relevant account and apply all needed control setting. Once there you can designate certain hours off-limits, games and programs that you do not approve of.



Mac Users:

To enable parental control you need to choose **System Preferences** from the **Apple menu**, and select the child's account to which you want to apply the control settings. The Parental Control feature on the Mac OS has a list of options that you can restrict and monitor internet browsing and application access.



Software/Apps:

There are a myriad of parental control software available for parents to have leverage over how their children use internet-connected devices, some are developed for free download and others require payment. Chief among what these application programmes will offer as a solution for parental control will include web and content

filtering, social network monitoring, remote device administration, application blocking restriction, location tracking and much more.

Here we will highlight a few free software/applications which can be effective when managing different devices children use:



Windows Live Family Safety:

This software was developed by Microsoft and is used on windows operating systems including any windows phone, to monitor the activities of children on the internet. In order to start using this application you first need to setup a windows live account and a user account on the computer, once this is done you can access all the features offered. Chief

among what you can do with this application include website restrictions, time restrictions, blocking specific programmes and viewing activity reports detailing a child's daily browsing and computer activity.

To have access to this software you need to go to Microsoft's website and download Windows Essentials and install the Family Safety package.

Please see direct URL download below:

<http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows/essentials>



K9 Web Protection:

This is an effective parental control software that can operate on both Windows and Macintosh OS X operating systems. It also has a safe protection browser app on itunes available for use on the iPhone, iPod Touch and iPad.

K9 Web Protection provides a parent with effective settings and options to keep children safe online. The software is able to block access to web sites based on the categories outlined which include pornography, sex education, alcohol, hacking, gambling and more. This feature protects children against adult content, security threats and any website that a parent



may deem inappropriate and would like blocked. K9 Web Protection has a safe search setting that primarily filters searches on popular browsers. This application keeps a log of all online activities including social networks, detailing the date and timestamps.

To use this software on a computer you can download through the Google search engine or you can go directly to the URL below:

<http://www1.k9webprotection.com/getk9/download-software>

Once the application is downloaded and you proceed with the installation you will be required to request a licence through a link that will be provided during installation. This license will be sent via an email for you to complete installation. Upon completion, the K9 Web Protection software will launch a Web-based interface that you can now access and apply settings to the device you want to control.



Secureteen:

This parental control app is available for cell phones and tablets across multiple platforms including android and apple iOS. One of the key features of Secureteen is the remote administration component, giving you the ability to manage a child's mobile device through an online user interface. The application is able to monitor

some social networks, block pornography, record Web History and restrict applications among other controls. All these functions are administered online once the settings are applied from the device.

To gain access to this application you can go to the Google play store on your android devices or apple itunes for iPhone, iPod Touch and iPad.

After the installation of the app you will be required to configure and register the device. You will be given a web address that directs you to the online dashboard that monitors the activities of the device and from there you can customize



other settings.

The web address for the secureteen dashboard is below:
www.secureteen.com



Qustodio:

This is another useful application that is similar to Secureteen in terms of its basic features. This application can be installed on different devices and platforms including Windows, Mac, iPhone, iPad and Android. Qu-stodio is made available for free but there is also a premium subscription that comes with more advanced fea-

tures such as location tracking, call monitoring and advanced monitoring for social networks. The free version does come with features that are as good as any other parent control tool used to keep track of what children do online. Monitoring of Web activity and Applications, Smart Web Filtering, Safe Search and Time Limit Controls are some of the features included in Qu-stodio.

To monitor a device you will need to install the app from the Google play store for android or itunes for apple devices. Once the application is installed and loaded on the device you will need to sign up using a valid email address so that you can log into the web-based interface in order to manage and apply settings to your child's device.

To access the free version of qustodio you can use the direct URL below:

<https://www.qustodio.com/en/family/downloads/>



Parents need to be more aware of the activities of their children online especially as predators devise more ingenious ways to target our children. The reality is that Jamaica's children will continue to have increased access to the internet and smart devices. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that as parents you seek to explore the different parental control tools as well as other solutions that will assist you in having greater management over the protection of your children. Sites such as InternetMatters will also provide helpful tips for parents on how to guide their children on social media. The link to the URL is below:

<http://www.internetmatters.org/>

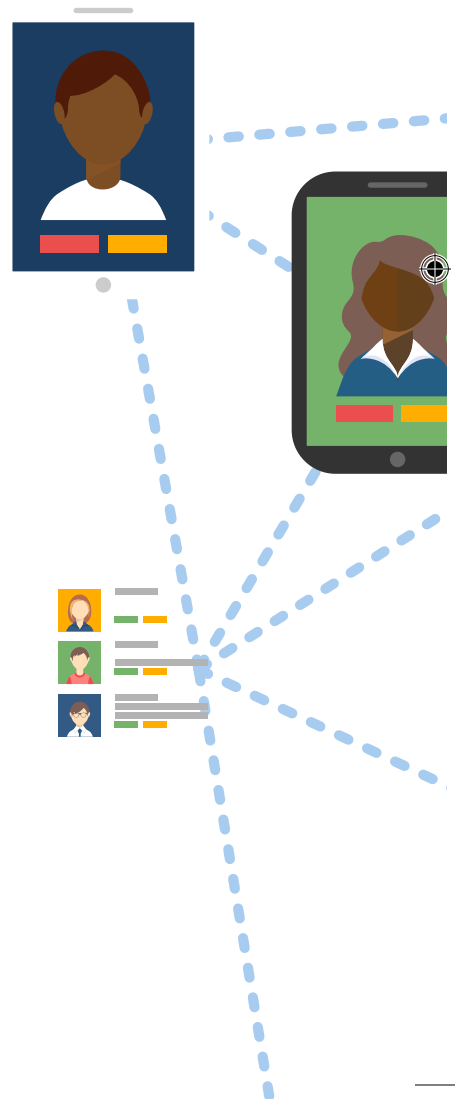


TIPS FOR KIDS

Being active on social networking sites is now part of many children's daily activities. Keeping in touch with friends and family, meeting new people and sharing photos and videos are just some of the things which children like to do when using these kinds of sites. Self expression and interacting with other children with similar interests is also a positive that the cyber space provides. However, there are online dangers which many children if not properly prepared for, will not know how to handle should they be faced with such a situation.

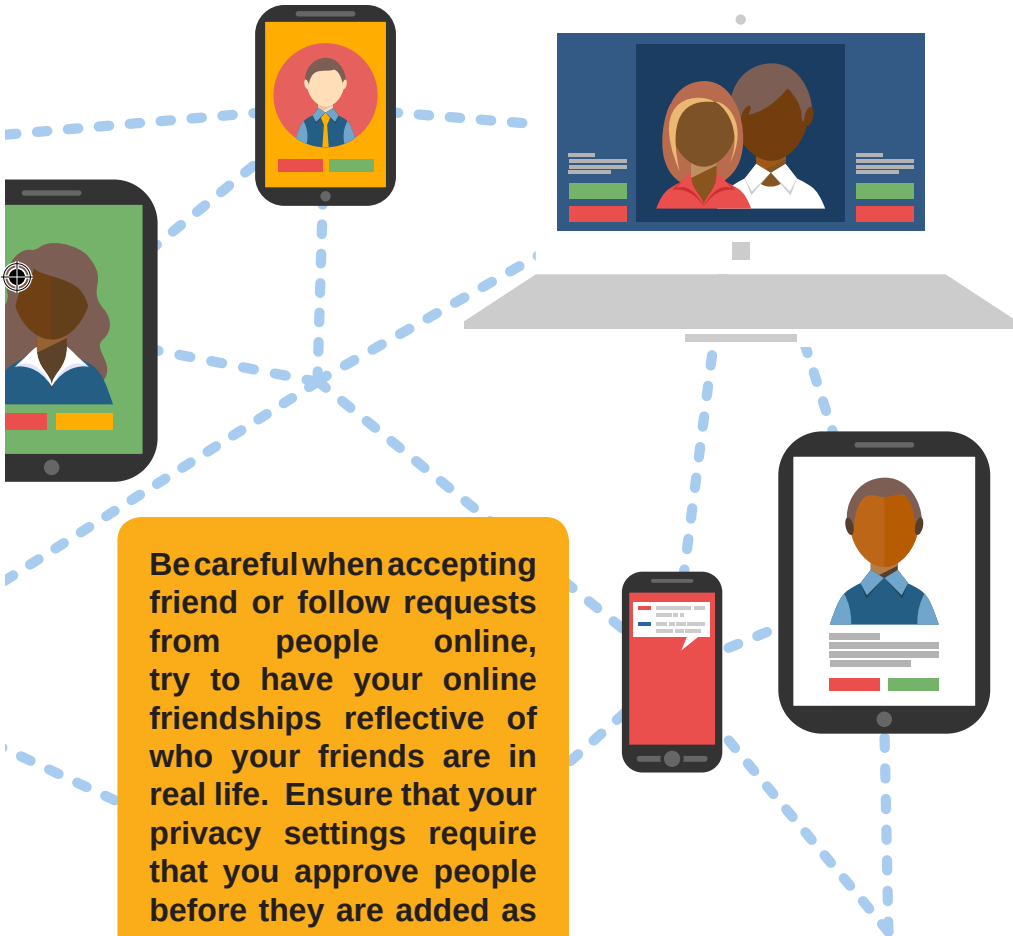
Below are some tips we suggest for children on how to safely surf the internet while having fun:

Never post any information you know is personal about yourself, your family or where you live. For example, do not post your phone number, email address or home address.





Never meet with anyone you have only interacted with online and tell your parent(s) if anyone asks you to meet up with them. Often what people say on the internet is not always who they are in reality.





*In addition, these simple guiding principles should
always be in your mind:*

01

*Don't communicate with
strangers online and never
agree to meet in person.*





02

Tell a parent or another adult you trust, if a stranger contacts you in a chat room, via email, text messaging application or on your social media page in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable.





03

Always seek permission from your parents when you are sharing anything online; if your mom or dad do not approve it is probably for your own good. Personal information includes your name, address, age, phone number, birthday, email address, where you go to school, and other facts about you. Refrain from sharing things like this online.





What can the school do?

Schools must help to empower parents to take control of their children's activities online in the home space, as the study indicates based on where children frequently access the internet, this would not correlate with school hours for the most part. Schools should help to equip parents with simple tools which will help to foster cyber safety in the home. . Likewise, parents should work hand in hand with schools if our children are to be good digital citizens.

Schools and their administrators should try and help bridge the digital divide between some parents and their children. While extensive classes for parents who have little knowledge about computers, smart phones and/or social media may not be feasible in every school setting, short demonstrations at PTA meetings or on a weekly or monthly basis could assist parents in increasing their understanding about the cyberspace in order to enforce standards with in the home.

We therefore suggest that the following could be done in order to set up short classes for parents conducted by the school through the Information Technology Unit:

Step 1

Have a first class/session which addresses the basics about computers and the internet. In doing this, the school can assess the needs of the parents and further develop on class one in preparation for additional ones based on identified weaknesses and gaps in knowledge of parents.



Step 2

Keep following up with parents, and ask them to report on what activities they have been able to keep up with as the class's progress.

Step 3

Hold a session where parents can share with each other on how they have been able to implement the cyber safety techniques they have learnt in the classes as well as to share how their children have responded to this.

Step 4

At the end of the series, appoint the most aware or advanced student as the point person who will assist the other parents with future queries.

Aside from supporting parents, schools must endeavour to enforce a no phones allowed during school hours policy, even if that means doing random checks throughout the term with students who violate this rule facing appropriate consequences. To deal with the issue of phones, schools could ask students to turn their phones in at the start of the day on arrival at school, where they will receive a tag for the phone which they will use to collect it at the end of the day.

Additionally, schools must ensure that the requisite safety features are installed or uploaded to all school computers with which children must engage or have access to. These devices should be checked frequently for the latest updates and a search report evaluated at least weekly by the IT unit to ensure children are not able to get pass these restrictions.







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